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CARMELITA

OR

FORCE AND FINESSE.

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS,

BY

HENRY J. W. DAM.

SACRAMENTO:
Lewis & Johnston, Printers, 410 J Street.

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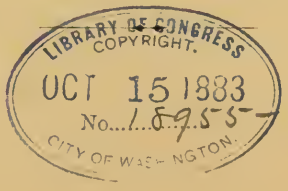

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CARMELITA:

Or, Force and Finesse.

By HENRY J. W. DAM.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CAPTAIN KINGSBURY.
DON RAMON VALDEZ.
ALBERTO MOLINO.
MANUELO.
STRAINE.
TIM REARDON.
THOMAS.
JOSE.
SHERIFF.
MINISTER.
CARMELITA.
ISABELLA.
MARIQUITA.
MARIA.
VAQUEROS, VILLAGERS, ETC.

TMP92-009030

CARMELITA;

OR,

Force and Finesse.

—o—

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Exterior at Old San Diego. House of Josefa, on platform with steps.* (R. 2 E. and R. 3 E.) *Tavern with raised veranda and steps.* (L. 2 E. and L. 3 E.) *Tables and chairs in front of tavern; rustic settees R. and L. Four musicians, with harp, two guitars and mandolin, on veranda. Tomale man with bucket leaning against steps. Background: drop showing public square with tropical foliage, old church beyond, and ocean in distance. Curtain discovers close of dance. Dance finishes and dancers group about stage at tables, drinking.* TIM *and* MARIQUITA *in advance.*

TIM. Hello, there! Chingaro muchacho Sacr-r-ramento.

[ANTONIO *enters from tavern.*]

Come here, ye cigar-box chromo. Gimme a bottle o' woine. Damn the expinse whin loveliness is thirsty.

ANT. (*Aside to* TIM.) A quart bottle, Senor?

TIM. A tin-cint bottle, an' don't you forget it. D'ye think I'm a millionaire, ye blaggard? (*Exit* ANTONIO *in tavern.*)

MARIA. (*Enters* R. 4 E.) A pretty time for dancing and singing and carousing.

ALL. Why?

TIM. What's the matther, Maria?

MAR. Why, old Josefa's not cold in her grave yet, and poor Lita is crying her pretty eyes out.

TIM. Faix, av she don't cry 'em in agin it's mesilf 'll jine the blind asylum wid her.

MARIQ. Wat, wat you say?

TIM. Oh, that's all right, Mariquita. It's you has the front seat in me affections. But ye wouldn't moind me likin Lita a little.

MAR. No. Lita is a good girl; too good for you. Poor

thing. She's all alone in the world. She lost a good friend in Joseta.

TIM. She'll have to quit ramblin' the hills, I'm thinkin', and work for a livin', work for a livin'. Faix, it's a pity to have to work between meals.

MAR. Lita work? She don't know any more about it than a child. Why, old Josefa never let her do a thing except run about and read story books. She's learned too much: it's spoiled her.

MARIQ. That's so; she is spoiled. She never goes to the dances, she never does anything that we do. She's too proud: she'll have to come down, now that she's a beggar.

TIM. Aisy there. She's a little lady, that's what she is. And we'll all be brothers and sisters to her, hey boys?

ALL. You bet we will.

MAR. It's little good you can do her. Do you know who's after her?

ALL. Who?

MAR. Don Ramon.

ALL. (*Indignantly.*) Don Ramon?

TIM. (*Aside.*) The ould divil. Goin' after the girl before the old woman's buried.

MAR. Yes, Don Ramon is hunting for her already. The strange priest is with him and the priest is going to take her to a convent, the Don says. But I don't believe it; I believe it's a trick.

TIM. Ye mean the priest that was with Josefa when she died?

MAR. Yes, the same one.

TIM. Well, well; it's a shame, that's all. And hasn't she any folks to prevent him?

MARIQ. She has a brother somewhere.

MAR. He's no good to her. He's in prison. He was sent there for robbing a stage. You see, when Josefa adopted her nobody looked out for him and he grew up bad.

TIM. I remember, now. Didn't he escape from prison?

MAR. I never heard of it.

TIM. Well, he did. Molino is his name. I seen it in the papers. They've not caught him yet.

MAR. Well, he can't help her, or anybody else. The old Don is too rich. It's a shame, a shame; she's too good a girl.

TIM. Well, well; an' what will the Captain say to that?

MAR. The Captain will do nothing against Don Ramon.

MARIQ. I should say not. Not against his fader-in-law.

TIM. His fader-in-law! Ye think the Captain's goin' to marry Miss Isabel, don't ye?

MAR. Of course he is.

TIM. An you know all about it; it's a great head ye have. Now, I'll bit twinty dollars (*feeling in his pockets, and finding a poker check*). I'll bit twinty dollars the Captain thinks more o' the little orphan than of all the Spanish girls, and all their money, in Califarny.

MARIQ. Nonsense; you don't know what you talk.

TIM. An' don't I. Why do he go gallivantin' all over the hills wid her, an' say, "This way me choild;" "Be aisy wid yer harse there, Lita;" "Don't sprain yer ankle there, darlin'?" (*Illustrating by affectionate gestures with* MARIQUITA.) Faix, av he ain't in love wid her I'll sell me eyes for oysters.

MAR. But the Senorita Isabella is very rich. She will have all Don Ramon's property, and she is awfully in love with the Captain. She's just crazy after him.

TIM. Is she now? Well, well. Begorra, when me new shute comes from New York, I'll have a thry at her mesilf. Wunther av the ould Don wouldn't like a descindant o' the Oirish Kings for a son-in-law? (*All laugh derisively.*)

TIM. Oh, ye can laugh, ye blackbirds. Wait till I'm elected Superior Judge. I'll show ye.

MARIQ. Yes indeed. Senor Reardon will be a great lawyer some day. He told me so.

MAR. *He* told you. (*Laughter.*)

TIM. There's where yer right, darlin'. Six months more an' I'll own the office an' the ould man. Wait till I do be grabbin' land titles on me own account. Faix it's a great profession, the law. Ould Sthraine there——

[*Enter* STRAINE L. U. E. *during speech.*]

STR. Old Straine, old Straine, old Straine! Are you talking of *me*, sir?

TIM. O, not at all, sir. Divil a word, yer highness (*lifting his right foot and inspecting it painfully*). It's an ould strain I have from a harse, sir. The hot weather brings it on.

STR. Where's Captain Kingsbury?

TIM. I don't know, sir.

STR. Don't know. Don't know. What do I pay you for? Go to the postoffice and then go to the devil. Old Straine. Old Straine. Old Straine. (*Goes off* R. 1 E. *muttering.*)

TIM. I will, sir. I'll be back to you in a jiffy. (*Starts for* L. U. E.)

MAR. Where are you going?

TIM. I'm going to the postoffice and then to the devil. (*Imitating* STRAINE.)

MAR. Well, I'm going to the bull fight.

TIM. hTe bull fight. Whoopa Toro! Come on, I'll go wid you.

ALL. (*Starting.*) Whoopa Toro. (*Exit all crying "whoopa toro,"* L. U. E.)

[*Enter* DON *and* MANUELO, R. U. E.]

DON. Ain't she a beauty? Diablo! Did you ever see anything so pretty, Manuelo?

MAN. (*a little angry.*) Don't call me Manuelo, Don Ramon. Do you want to give the whole business away?

DON. Oh, there's nobody to hear.

MAN. Well, there might be. And its bad business this playing the bogus priest. I don't feel very comfortable in this toggery. I wasn't cut out for a priest you know; not until you made me one.

DON. Well, I won't make any more breaks. Did you see her figure? That plump little bosom! She's a little peach, I tell you, and she's dead ripe.

MAN. Yes, too good for you, you old wretch. You're old enough to be her father.

DON. And young enough to be her lover. Carramba! Wait till I dress her up in a silk wrapper (*rubbing his hands lustfully*), flesh-colored stockings, French slippers, a little bottle of Roederer frappe. Manuelo, she's a queen, an angel.

MAN. There you go again. But say, about this property. I want to know where I come in.

DON. The property is worth about twenty thousand in land and stock, near Mazatlan. My house there is handling it. It belongs to the old woman, through her husband, but she never got wind of his death or heard of it. It goes to Lita as the old woman's heir. You have the will.

MAN. It's in the house there.

DON. And you have your appointment as the girl's guardian?

MAN. Yes, that's all right; I confessed the old woman and she entrusted the girl to me. I made affidavit in Court this morning and was appointed her guardian. I'm her legal guardian. Nothing can change that.

DON. Well, now you want the old woman's marriage certificate and her will. That'll complete the chain. And you can have all the property. Twenty thousand is pretty good pay for a little masquerading, hey Manuelo!

MAN. But about the girl. I may have trouble.

DON. Trouble, how?

MAN. She's not a Catholic. She may kick at the idea of the convent.

DON. Let her kick. It won't do her any good. You have the law on your side. But do it quickly; I don't want any

talk if I can help it. Come on, let's get the papers first, and then the girl.. (*Exit into house.*)

[*Enter* ISABELLA *and* CAPTAIN, L. U. E. *He leads the way down to settee,* L. *She seats herself fanning violently, as if out of temper.*]

CAPT. Shall I get you a lemonade?

ISA. (*Not looking at him.*) No.

CAPT. Won't you take a shadier seat?

ISA. This is shady enough.

CAPT. May I light a cigarette?

ISA. As you like. (*He does not light.*) [*Silence.*]

ISA. Why did you not come for me to ride this morning?

CAPT. This morning? (*Surprised.*)

ISA. Yes, this morning. I believe I did myself the honor to accept your invitation two days ago.

CAPT. By Jove, Isabel, you are right. I am heartily ashamed of my forgetfulness. At least accept my apologies.

ISA. It must have been something very important to keep you from an engagement you yourself made. Military duty, I suppose.

CAPT. No, it was not military duty. The fact is, old Josefa died yesterday and left her foster-daughter, a valued friend of mine, all alone in the world.

ISA. And who is this foster-daughter; a gawky working girl?

CAPT. She is not gawky, nor is she of the working class.

ISA. Precisely. It is just what I supposed. An old peasant woman dies and leaves a very pretty girl to be tenderly looked after by somebody, and a chivalrous Captain of cavalry poses as the good Samaritan.

CAPT. I do not wish to have my motives questioned, Miss Valdez. I have already apologized for my failure to come for you. Is there anything further you desire?

ISA. I—nothing in the world. It is the merest trifle to me. Only it happens that this is not the first engagement broken, nor the second. Nor am I the only lady who does not think Captain Kingsbury's erratic conduct of late exactly adorable. (*Rising.*) Captain Kingsbury, our friendship has been very pleasant. If it is to be continued it must be conducted in future in a manner somewhat more considerate of me. After what has taken place——

CAPT. If you will pardon my stupidity, might I ask what has taken place?

ISA. For three months, sir, you have chosen to spend most of your idle time at our house. For three months you have been my constant cavalier, in public and in private. Now, to

me all this is nothing. Thank Heaven I am heart whole, even under the withering rays of Captain Kingsbury's fascinations. If you should leave this country to-morrow, if the sea should swallow or the clouds enfold you, my heart would never ask itself whither you had gone or when you would return.

CAPT. I never did myself the honor to suppose otherwise.

ISA. But it is not that. This is a little village and the people have long tongues. They have coupled your name with that of Don Ramon's daughter. They have said you were to marry her. That you did not marry her would matter little, but that you should, in the sight of the whole town, cast her aside for a beggarly orphan of the village, is not to be borne, sir. Ours is an old family and a proud name. I know well that I am violating all rules of etiquette and maidenly modesty in thus uttering my mind, but sir, Spanish blood speaks frankly and does not weigh its words, and the pride of the daughter of Don Ramon Valdez shall be insulted by no man. It is not love that speaks. Don't flatter yourself. It is the pride of a woman and of a family, and you shall make amends or you shall rue it.

CAPT. I understand you clearly, Miss Valdez. Do not fear. That I knew nothing of the gossip of which you speak attribute to two things, my ignorance of the popular language and the fact that never in my association with this young lady has one thought of love, one sentiment that was not of the most fraternal character, entered my mind or hers. Rest assured I will make any and every amend to you that lies in my power. As far as visiting your house is concerned, I shall certainly err no farther in that direction.

ISA. But, Captain, it is not necessary that you entirely desert us.

CAPT. Do you desire that I still visit you?

ISA. I have made no objection to that.

CAPT. It shall be as you desire. Good-day, Senorita.

ISA. Good-day, Captain. (*Exit* CAPTAIN L. U. E.)

ISA. (*Looking after him.*) He's gone to find her. He loves her. I know it if he does not. Oh yes. He shall wed his low-born love, but he shall court her in a bed of nettles. Basta! I could murder her.

[*Enter* DON *and* PRIEST *from house.* PRIEST *does business of examining and pocketing papers during dialogue.*]

DON. What is the matter, Isabella?

ISA. Nothing.

DON. And does nothing arrange your features in such an angelic expression?

ISA. No, it is not nothing. I am being insulted, played with, laughed at by the whole town.

DON. What, what is this?

ISA. Your Captain there has left me, to run after this orphan. It is scoundrelly; I will not stand it.

DON. What! The Captain in love with this girl!

ISA. I only know what my maid has told me. The Captain and this girl have been rambling about together for a month, and he is devoted to her.

DON. This is important. (*To* PRIEST.) You must find her at once and take her before he hears of it. Come, come, Isabella. Bah! Don't worry over her. (*Exit all* R. U. E.)

[*Enter* LITA L. U. E.]

(*Music. She comes down stage as if to seat herself* L. *Alberto thrusts head out of door of cottage and looks cautiously around. As she reaches settee* ——)

BER. Lita, hist——

LITA. Berto! (*She looks all around in fear. He also looks about; then goes across to her, carrying bundle in newspaper.*)

LITA. Why Berto, brother, what are you doing here.

BER. (*Sullkily.*) Nothing to eat.

LITA. But why did you come. It's so dangerous.

BER. I'd sooner get fat in prison than starve in a cave.

LITA. Yes I know dear. But you might have had patience and not run this needless risk.

BER. Needless. You didn't come last night or the night before. I ain't had a mouthful since yesterday till I climbed in the kitchen window just now. I wasn't scared, as I knew everybody would be at the bull fight, and I was hungry.

LITA. But you'll go right back now?

BER. Yes, I'm going. I've got some things to last me over to-morrow, but I depend on you to-morrow night. Don't you fail me. Good-bye. (*Exit Berto* R. 1 E.)

LITA. I won't dear, never fear. (*Steps up step of house looking after him.*) Poor Berto, Poor Berto, (*sigh*). He's all I have in the world now. All I have in the whole world. (*Exit into house.*)

[*Enter* STRAINE *and* CAPTAIN L. U. E.]

CAPT. This is very serious, Straine, what does it mean.

STR. Mean—mean—means the girl's got some property somewhere and that priest is after it.

CAPT. But Don Ramon doesn't care for property.

STR. He, no. He's after the girl. Priest puts her in convent. Old Don snakes her out, and ruins her. Same old game. He'll get her.

CAPT. He will, will he, the beast.

STR. Tut, tut, your father-in-law you know, musn't talk like that.

CAPT. There's little prospect of that, now. We're in the midst of a hot quarrel.

STR. Take care Kingsbury. This Spanish blood is bad blood when its up.

CAPT. Where's Lita?

STR. You ain't going to fight the Don, are you? I believe you are in love with her.

CAPT. Nonsense. Straine, see here. I am a man of the world. I've been watching and studying this girl for three months, and I tell you she has the noblest, purest, most beautiful nature I ever saw. The old woman has reared her as delicately as a lily grown in the shadow, and I as a man will not stand by and see that old brute get hold of her. And you won't either, my friend. You're too much of a man for that.

STR. Is she in love with you?

CAPT. Not a bit. She has never thought of such a thing.

STR. Well, suit yourself. I'll stand by you.

CAPT. Thanks. I have been thinking of her ever since the old woman fell sick. I have a home for her with my mother, and I'm going to try and get her to go. (CAPTAIN *crosses as he speaks and knocks at door of house. Lita opens and stands in doorway.*)

CAPT. Lita.

LITA. Yes, Captain.

CAPT. Can I speak with you a moment? (*She takes his hand and crosses to settee,* L. *They sit.*)

CAPT. Lita, friend, I want to talk with you a little. I know well that all your thoughts are out yonder with the foster-mother, but there are things which will not wait.

LITA. (*Drying her eyes.*) What things, Captain?

CAPT. Lita, you are all alone in the world now. You have no one to look to for care, for protection, even for bread. And that is why I wanted to tell you that over beyond the snow mountains, away in the far land I have told you of so often, is another mother, a white-haired, tender, loving mother, who loves me as Josefa did you. There was a sister once, a girl like you, and ever since the sister went away and the mother buried half her heart along with her under the lilies of the spring time, there has been a deep shadow in her eyes and a great sorrow in her life. I wrote to her about you yesterday, before Josefa died. I know she will want you to come. Lita, dear, will you come to her and make her happy? Tell me, my friend, will you come?

LITA. You are very kind, Captain. Kind as you have always been. I know she would be kind to me. I know I should love her as you do, but——

CAPT. But what, Lita.

LITA. I cannot leave this place. I cannot leave it now, and I may never be able to go away. Here I was born. This sunshine sea, I have known ever since I was a wee child. The foster-mother whose affection and care have been all to me, has been laid away to sleep in the shadow of yonder cross. I should like to go, Captain, so much. I know it would be home, happiness, and love for me, but there are other reasons which you do not know. There are ties which no one knows. No, Captain. It makes me happy, even in my sorrow, that you are so thoughtful, so considerate, and so kind to me. Dear friend, you don't know how I thank you.

CAPT. But suppose I should go away?

LITA. Oh, you are not going! You, too?

CAPT. I may have to go at any time. I have stayed already longer than I expected to, much longer. And it will be very hard for me to go away and leave my companion of so many happy hours at the mercy of the world. I have stayed because your mountains and your fields and your blue ocean were more beautiful than I had ever known them when I looked at them through your eyes and by your side. It has been very sweet to me, Lita, this summerland, and I cannot go away without knowing what is to become of its princess.

LITA. I cannot go away. I cannot go with you. Oh, Captain, I am so unhappy. (*Sobbing.*)

CAPT. (*Aside.*) Dear little heart. If I could only take it to my own.

MAR. (*Enters* L. U. E, *and goes to house.*) Lita! Lita! where is Lita?

CAPT. Here, Maria.

MAR. The Don and a strange priest are looking for you. They are going to take you away.

LITA. Take *me* away?

TIMOTHY. (*Enters* L. U. E. *after* MARIA.) Yes, Miss. They have a paper wid a seal, an ilegant gould seal. In all my legal experience——

STRAINE. Shut up, you idiot. What did you say?

MAR. Don Ramon and a priest are going to take Lita.

LITA. What does it mean? They wouldn't take me when I do not want to go.

STR. They wouldn't, hey? Like to see something they wouldn't take. Captain, this looks badly.

CAPT. They shall not take her.

STR. What can you do?

CAPT. Well, let's stand back and see what they do first. They're coming now. Don't be afraid Lita. They shall not harm a hair of your head.

[*Enter* DON *and* PRIEST, L. U. E. *followed by people. They come down to group,* MANUELO *leading.*]

MAN. Are you the girl they call Lita, the foster-daughter of Josefa?

LITA. (*First looking up at* CAPTAIN, *who nods.*) Yes, sir.

MAN. Do you not remember me, my child?

LITA. No, sir.

MAN. Do you not remember how Josefa, when she was dying, put your hand in mine and told you I would take you to the convent where some good ladies would care for you and be mothers to you?

LITA. No, I do not remember that. I do not remember anything after they told me she was going to die.

MAN. Well, that is what she said, and the Court has made me your guardian. I have come for you, now.

LITA. Oh, this is horrible. I am not a Catholic. I do not want to go. I cannot go. Maria will take care of me, won't you, Maria?

MAR. That I will, and gladly. As long as I have a roof and a crust, it is hers.

MAN. Be silent woman. Do not interfere. (*To Lita gently taking her arm.*) You must come with me my child.

LITA. I will not go.

MAN. You must. There is no other way.

LITA. (*Struggling.*) You are going to take me. Oh, mercy, who will help me! It is not right to take a girl against her will. Oh, Captain, tell him I do not want to go!

CAPT. Let go.

MAN. (*Still holding her.*) Who are you?

CAPT. Let go, (*taking one step. Manuelo lets go.*)

CAPT. Lita go in the house. I will talk to these gentlemen. (*Lita exits in house slowly and amid deep silence.*)

CAPT. You say you have authority to take this young lady.

MAN. I have.

CAPT. Where is it.

MAN. Here. (*Hands paper to Captain who opens and reads, Straine looking over shoulder.*) "Pedro Sepulveda is hereby appointed guardian of the said minor child."

STR. The paper is all right, Captain.

CAPT. The paper may be all right. The means by which

it was obtained may not. (*To Manuelo.*) Is your name Pedro Sepulveda?

MAN. It is.

CAPT. How were you granted this paper.

MAN. By the Superior Court, on my own affidavit with those of witnesses, at the request of the foster mother. That is enough for you. That paper is enough for anybody.

DON. I endorse that.

CAPT. Well my friends you may be acting rightly in this matter but I don't believe it. This young lady is under my protection. Whatever you have to say to her you can say to me.

DON. By what right do you obstruct the execution of this document.

CAPT. By my own right. By the right which every *man* has to protect the innocent from the machinations of the vile.

DON. Take care, sir. You are doing a dangerous thing. One in which neither your uniform nor your influence shall protect you.

CAPT. Threaten if you like. I am able to take care of myself and of her.

DON. Your chivalry is beautiful. Almost as beautiful as the young lady whom you so platonically protect.

CAPT. Spare your sarcasms. I am acting for her as if she were my sister, nothing more. Remember that, sir. One more insult will cost you dear.

MAN. Excuse me gentlemen, one moment. I do not think the young lady will oppose the wishes of Josefa. Nor do I think the Captain desires to defy the law. Let us have the young lady here. Let her get over her surprise, which is natural and put the matter before her.

CAPT. Will you abide by her decision.

[*Don Plucks* MANUELO'S *sleeve and consults him. Shaking head. Priest also shakes head.*]

MAN. Yes, I will abide by her decision.

CAPT. Maria, go and call her.

[*Maria goes in house calling "Lita, Lita," inside. Retrns.*]

MAR. She's gone.

CAPT., PRIEST and DON. Gone!

MAR. Yes, she's not in the house.

DON. Go and find her.

TIM. Find her! Find a humming bird.

DON. What do you mean?

TIM. You won't get her. She has some hole in the hills where the devil couldn't find her.

DON. Bah!

TIM. Well, you may bah or moo. When old Josefa was sick it was two days before Lita turned up, and we hunted the whole country.

CAPT. (*Aside to Straine.*) I think I can find her.

DON. So, so, sir. This is a trick of yours. Where has she gone?

CAPT. It is no trick. I know no more than you.

DON. Basta! Don't keep up this sickly pretense. Where is she?

CAPT. I have answered.

DON. All right, sir. For love of a girl who is doubtless already your mistress you propose to defy the law and deceive these good people.

CAPT. Take care of your words, or by heaven I'll teach you.

DON. Take care care of yourself, or a prison will do it for you. You are doing a rash thing, and the law will show you no mercy.

CAPT. And what are you doing? Why are you on this girl's track? Why are you examining papers and fighting for her capture? Why are you backing up this priest? *You* question *my* motives, you old scoundrel.

DON. Take that back. (*Step.*)

CAPT. You know it is true. (*Step.*)

[*They are about to fight, when* MANUELO *interposes.*]

MAN. Peace, gentlemen, peace.

CAPT. There shall be no peace between us till you relinquish your villain design. Good people, here, will you stand by and see this thing? Have you no wives to guard, no sisters to protect, no children to save from dishonor? Will you see a pure, beautiful girl, ensnared by a man old enough to be her father? Will you——

[*During speech people close in around* DON, *murmuring men acingly. At last word* PRIEST *makes a sign. All drop on knees save* CAPTAIN, MANUELO *and* DON, *with heads uncovered among men.*]

CAPT. Well, kneel you slaves. Kneel and submit. But know one thing, Don Ramon: There is one white blossom you shall not blight; one jewel you shall not blemish, and if ever your vile hand does the shadow of a wrong to Carmelita, you shall pay for it with the last drop of your black heart's blood.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A cavern which has been used as an Aztec tomb. Square entrance* C. F., *disclosing Aztec ruin in the distance. Floor paved in Aztec mosaics. Ceiling arched and ceiled with triangular plates in Aztec patterns, joined in three-sided convex joints. Back and walls decorated with Aztec sun-burst and Aztec insignia and symbols. Entrance has stone door with Aztec bas relief on interior. Passage* R. 2 E., *partly concealed by image- Partly ruined images of Aztec workship about stage. At* L. 2 E. *a statue; between legs a fire. Sarcophagi vases, etc., about stage. Appearance of age and decay over all. Curtain discovers* ALBERTO *seated at stone table* C., *sitting on stone seat working at goat hide.* LITA *seated by fire, looking at flames.*

BER. You are sure no one saw you come in?

LITA. Not a soul. These are lonely hills, Berto, and nobody knows of this place.

BER. But they will, just the same. Those Sheriffs are hunting high and low. I know that; and sooner or later they'll find me, dead certain.

LITA. But if they find you here you can get away by the passage.

BER. And be caught inside of a mile; arrested the moment I stepped on the steamer? Not much. I must get out of this rat-hole. I must get to Mexico unknown, unseen. I can't sleep. There's not a night that I lie down that I don't wake up with a jump, with my blood freezing. I can't close my eyes in sleep but what I feel the chill of the thick, gray prison walls around me, and see the cold moonlight staring at me through the round holes in the iron door. I see the guard on the wall with his rifle on me. I hear the clang of the bolts ringing like devil's music along the corriders. I hear the clank of the chain and the crack of the whip and the gurgle and swish of the water torture, that is always turned on me and always leaps at me just as I jump from bed to dodge its horror. I can't stand it. I must get away. I've got to get away, I tell you. Do you know that? (*Paces up and down.*)

LITA. Dear brother, if I could only help you.

BER. Lita, why can't you go with the priest?

LITA. Why do you keep saying that?

BER. You agree to go and I'll tell you.

LITA. It is impossible.

BER. And why is it. You can save me that way.

LITA. Brother, listen; I know what it is to put myself in Don Ramon's power and you know as well as I. I have done everything for you that a sister could. I led you here in the night when it was dark and the stones cut my feet till there was blood on every foot-print. I cared for you when you were sick. I will take care of you, guard you and protect your secret as long as I have breath to breathe and life to live. You can have my life, my all, but I will never go with those men.

BER. Bah! you're in love with the Captain.

LITA. I in love with him! I lift my hopes, my dreams even to such a man as he. No Berto, even if he were in my thoughts I have banished him for you. I have only one desire, to see you safe and happy.

BER. Then why will you not go with the priest.

LITA. Because, while I will sacrifice my life for you, for nothing under heaven will I sacrifice my honor.

BER. And I say you are wrong. A silly girl with her head full of story book notions. I say you shall go.

LITA. Oh, Berto! Berto! you don't know what you say. You do not mean it. Tell me you do not mean it. My God, I shall go crazy!

BER. Shh, that's all right. I didn't mean it. I was only joking. There, don't be a baby.

LITA. Don't say such things, they frighten me. I will guard you, Berto, I will keep your secret from everyone and you will escape soon, I know you will.

BER. Hark! I hear a step. (*Both listen intently.*)

LITV. It is. It's some one coming down the cliff. Hide Berto, hide! Mercy! who can it be? (*Exit Berto* R. H.)

[*Enter* CAPTAIN C.]

LITA. You! You here.

CAPT. Well, well, and this is my welcome, after all my seeking.

LITA. But why did you seek? Why did you endeavor to find me? There is no one with you?

CAPT. No one.

LITA. And nobody knows this place but you?

CAPT. Don't fear Lita, no one knows it. I would not have found it if you yourself had not told me of your hiding place and given me a hint as to where it was. Don't you remember? But what if anyone did know it. Am I not able to protect you? (*Advances toward her She retreats.*)

LITA. You—you must not stay here, Captain. You must go away.

CAPT. Why, what has come over you? You used to be brave as a toreador. Now you are nervous and frightened as a hare. Poor little heart. Has hiding so unnerved you that you are even afraid of *me?*

LITA. Oh, no; it is not that. Believe me. But you must not stay here. Come, you would not stay if I did not want you to. Come, see, (*taking his hand*) I will go with you.

CAPT. And leave this place?

LITA. No, but I will walk with you a long ways, if you like. Come, Captain, come. You will come when Lita asks you. (*She seizes mubia and hastily arranges it about face.*)

CAPT. Well, this is very strange. What can have come over her?

LITA. Are you coming? (*Taking his hand and walking toward* C.) I will walk ever so far, and you shall tell me all the news in town. (*Exit* LITA *and* CAPTAIN, C.)

[*Enter* BERTO, R. H. *Runs to door and watches them.*]

BER. So, he has found her, curse him, and found me, too, which is a damned sight more important. (*Walks across and back.*) The old Don is my man. He wants her and will pay a mighty sight bigger price for her than a pardon. A pardon, that's what I want. Carajo! If I could only see him to-night. To-morrow that spangled officer will have her, and the whole game will be up. Let me see. It will be dark in half an hour. I can trust the night and a disguise. Where's that beard. (*Hunting about the stage and finding it, puts it on.*) Don Ramon, we will do business together. She'll be just as well off with you as the Captain. Better, I guess. Where's my hat? Hang it I can't find anything. (*Hunts for it and goes in passage*, R.)

[*Enter* ISABELLA, *in riding habit, and* TIM. *They enter timidly,* ISABELLA *in advance.*]

ISA. You are sure he came this way?

TIM. Yis, ma'am. I watched him up the canyon. He hunted around for awhile and then disappeared. He must have come in here.

ISA. You have good eyes, Tim. I will double what I promised you, and give Mariquita a present besides. (*Aside.*) I knew the lover would find her, find her for *me.* I wonder if she is really here.

TIM. Ugh! What's that?

ISA. Only a bat. Don't be frightened. Didn't you ever see a bat before?

TIM. Not exactly that kind, mum. What a devil of a place it is at all.

ISA. Nothing remarkable. Only an old cave tomb.

TIM. A tomb, is it. Howly mother. And thim? (*Pointing to sarcophagi.*)

ISA. Simply respectable Aztecs, who were once dead.

TIM. Be the bones o' Saint Pether, I want none o' this. (*Inspecting vase.*) Faix the Azchics gave their friends a foine sind off, annyhow.

ISA. Why, it's gold.

TIM. Gould, is it? Gould! Begorra I'll be married to-morrer.

ISA. You wouldn't keep it?

TIM. I wouldn't? Did ye iver know a lawyer let go av anything wanst he got his hand on it?

ISA. It might be haunted.

TIM. Ugh! (*Dropping it.*)

ISA. You *better* keep it, Tim.

TIM. Go long wid you. Would I be haunted be some ould Aztec dressed up in tin pans and devilthry? Not be a——— O-o-o murther!

[BERTO *runs in suddenly from* R, *confronts them, springs back with* "Carramba!" *and draws long knife.* ISABELLA *retreats a couple of steps and* TIM *jumps behind her, looking out from petticoats. They stare at each other.*]

ISA. Put up your knife, sir. We mean no harm.

BER. (*Putting up knife slowly and suspiciously.*) Oh, ho! I see. You're old Ramon's daughter, ain't you?

ISA. Yes. What then?

BER. Is he hunting for the girl who ran away?

ISA. Yes. He is in the valley about half a mile from here.

BER. And you left him to track the Captain?

ISA. Not at all. I merely took a ride by myself and found this place.

BER. That's all right. You'd like to see her found, I s'pose?

ISA. Suppose that I did.

BER. Well, you go and tell the Don that you met a man who knows where she's hid. He can't get her without me, you understand? So you tell him to meet me at the white rock in Stone Valley, just as quick as he can. It's on the other side of this hill. Will you do that?

ISA. I will.

BER. Then go now. How soon can he be there?

ISA. In ten minutes.

BER. And mind you, not a word of me or this place. If you betray me he'll never see her.

ISA. I understand perfectly. (*She nods and starts away to exit* C. TIM *bows low.* BERTO *takes knife and* TIM *jumps out. Exit* ISA *and* TIM C.)

BER. Carajo! this is lucky. The old Don can get me a pardon easy enough. And I shall be free to walk in the daylight and snap my fingers at the police. But the Don. He may have men with him. He may capture me. (*Thinks.*) He must come here. If he wants to talk business with me he must do it in my office. My office, a coyote's den in the hills. It's rough on Lita. But no it ain't, either. She's dead gone on the Captain, and he'll only ruin her. And the Don 'll be a father to her. Yes, a father, damn him. (*Rises and takes hat.*)

[*Enter* LITA, C.]

LITA. Where are you going, Berto?

BER. Out to get some air. I've been here all day. So that son of a gun has found us.

LITA. He has found me. He knows nothing of you and never will.

BER. Bah! He'll be back again.

LITA. He will not. He promised me.

BER. And you think he'll keep his promise?

LITA. I know he will. I keep mine. You know that.

BER. Don't get watery. It's bad enough without tears. Well, I'm off. (*Exit* BERTO R. LITA *does not look up. She gazes into fire.*)

LITA. He loves me. I know he does; and I must not love him. I must deceive him; must let him doubt me, suspect me, and all for a brother who never brought me anything but unhappiness. Oh! why is life so hard? Why is fate so cruel? Poor Berto! It is selfish of me to think this way when he is so deep in trouble. If he can only get away without being discovered. I wonder where the Captain is. I wonder if he is thinking of me. And he tried so hard to take me with him. Can he love me? Can *he* love *me?* Dear Captain! (*Takes picture from bosom.*) Oh! how grand, how noble you are!

[*Enter* BERTO R. *hurriedly.*]

BER. Lita, there are some horsemen on the plain. I think they are headed this way. Go up by the lone pine and watch them. Quick, will you? (*She hastily seizes nubia.*)

BER. Stay twenty minutes at least. I want to be certain.

LITA. Yes, dear. (*Exit* LITA *hastily* C.)

BER. (*Watches her out, waits a moment, and then closes door carefully.*) This way, gentlemen.

[*Enter* DON *and* MANUELO R.]

BER. You'll excuse me a minute. I want to be sure that we are not followed. (*Exit* BERTO R.)

MAN. What's the plan?

DON. We must get her to-night, at all hazards. We can't lose any more time. The people are talking, and evidently understand the game; and if it gets beyond the little town and into the newspapers, it will make me trouble. Carramba! The more she eludes me the more I want her.

MAN. But suppose we get her. What then?

DON. You start north by the first train, pretending that you are going to San Jose to the Convent. Then you leave her at San Luis, and take her to my ranch on the arroyo. You know the big hacienda?

MAN. Yes.

DON. I will telegraph and have a carriage and driver at San Luis. Then I will remain at old San Diego to-morrow to avert suspicion, and come up to-morrow night.

MAN. All right. Here he is. Stay. Suppose he won't give her up?

DON. Oh, there's no fear. I'll give him any price, no matter what.

[*Enter* BERTO R.]

DON. Well, sir, who are you?

BER. Alberto Molino, senors.

DON. What are you doing here?

BER. The fact is, my residence, when I'm home, is at San Quentin. I'm down here for my health.

DON. An escaped convict?

BER. That's about the size of it.

DON. Well, you sent word that you know where this girl is.

BER. I do.

DON. And you'll find her for us?

BER. If I'm paid for it.

DON. What do you want?

BER. Only a trifle. I want a pardon, and you can fix it. A pardon, Don Ramon.

DON. A pardon? Well, what have I to do with pardons?

BER. You know the Governor well; you have big political influence; ten times more than is necessary.

DON. (*Thinks.*) Why, even if I could get you one, it would take three days to send to Sacramento and back.

BER. Well, I'm in no particular hurry.

DON. But I am. We want the girl to-night. I'll give you money—plenty of it.

BER. I have named my price. I get a pardon or you don't get the girl. You've got to get her quick, too, for you're not the only man who is close on her trail.

DON. The Captain?

BER. I'm not saying who.

DON. I don't think I could get you a full pardon. I might get you a conditional one.

BER. What is that?

DON. One that depends upon your leaving the State immediately and never returning.

BER. Well, that will do. All I want is to get out of this glorious climate and not be troubled by the law after I do get out. I want to be free.

DON. Well, show us the girl, and in three days you shall have it.

BER. Oh, no; don't be too rapid. Hand me the pardon and I hand you the girl.

DON. What is the use of waiting? I will guarantee the pardon.

BER. And who will guarantee you?

DON. Father Sepulveda. You can trust him?

BER. Trust nobody. I can't hold you to your agreement. You know that.

DON. I'll give you any guarantee you like.

BER. Then write me something. Give me something in black and white. I'll give it back to you when I get the pardon. Will you do that?

DON. Yes, I'll do that. (*Takes note-book and writes.*) "In three days I promise to deliver to Alberto Molino a conditional pardon from the Governor, depending upon his leaving the State. Failing, that I agree to help him to leave the State with safety. R. Valdez." There, (*tearing it out*), will that do?

BER. (*Looking at paper.*) That'll do. Now you're a sort of accessory.

DON. Oh, well, I shan't worry over that.

BER. Now, where do I meet you and get the document?

DON. You know my ranch on the arroyo, thirty miles from here?

BER. Yes.

DON. Well, you come there to-morrow night. Come after dark. Here is a card. Give it to the gate-keeper, and he will let you in. (*Gives him card with something on it he has written.*)

BER. (*Reading.*) "Pass bearer." All right. Now let us lose no more time. How many men have you got?

DON. Four, well armed.

BER. They will do, I think. If the Captain is with her he'll fight.

DON. What, the Captain? Can we catch him, too?

BER. Maybe. Where are the men?

DON. Down the valley about half a mile.

BER. We must hurry. The Captain may get her before we do.

DON. Come on; there's no time to lose.

[*Exit* DON and MANUELO R. BERTO *glances to see they are gone and opens door. He looks out and makes gesture of anger.*]

BER. Demonio! The Irishman! What the devil is he after? I'll get rid of him mighty quick, the scarecrow. (*Conceals himself behind statue* L.)

[*Enter* TIM *timidly* C.]

TIM. (*Looking carefully about.*) No wan home? (*Advances.*) Wundher where Misther Nightmare has gone? Begorra, he's a nice, pleasant picture to meet on a dark night. (*Advances to sarcophagus* L. C.) Gould, ivery wan o' them; an' worth a hundred dollars. Timothy Reardon in his great act of collectin' a probate fee; administerin' on the estate of an Aztec. Begorra, it bates the Dutch! (*As he reaches for vase* BERTO *utters a hollow groan.*)

TIM. Ugh! (*Retreating.*) What's that? (*Waits and reaches again for vase.* BERTO *groans again.*)

TIM. Go 'way wit you. (*To Statue.*) Faix, they're no good to you, ould three-card Montezuma. (*Hastily seizes three or four vases and pops them into sack which he draws from his coat.* BERTO *groans loud and throws pinch of gunpowder into fire.* TIM *drops sack, yells with fright and rushes out* C.)

BER. (*Laughing.*) He'll not stop this side of town. (*Picks up vases and sack, and takes them to back of stage. Returns.*) Now for the Don and his men. Three days, and I am free! (*Exit* R. H.)

[*Enter* CAPTAIN *and* LITA. *They come down stage silently. She sits by fire. He stands looking at her.*]

CAPT. Lita, why do you repulse me? Why do you drive me from you? I have offered you an honorable name, a man's whole affection, a man's whole heart. Do you doubt me?

LITA. Ah, no, Captain. I trust you fully, wholly, as I trust God. But I must not love you, I cannot listen to you; I cannot listen. (*She turns away wearily and leans against statue. He strides up and down the stage. He discovers goat hide and needle and coat of* BERTO.)

CAPT. Lita.

LITA. Yes.

CAPT. Are these things yours?

LITA. (*Presses hand to heart and braces herself.*) Yes, they are mine. I had to amuse myself with something.

CAPT. And this coat; is this yours?

LITA. Yes, it is mine.

CAPT. Lita, are you telling me the truth?

LITA. Have I ever told you aught else?

CAPT. Are you telling me the truth?

LITA. Yes, I am. (CAPTAIN *starts for entrance* R. *She glides in front of him.*) Stop, you must not enter there.

CAPT. And why not?

LITA. You must not. That is sufficient.

CAPT. Are you here in this cave alone?

LITA. Yes, I am; but you shall not enter there. What right have you to enter a room, wherever it be, that is mine?

CAPT. And this is my frank, simple, honest little companion of the plains; innocent as the birds, honest as the winds—the winds, fortunately, that one cannot follow to see whither they go and what they do. Oh, Lita! Lita! have I been so blind? Have I, who thought you noble above all women, been so deceived—(*She staggers. He catches her. She recovers and grips rustic seat, looking him full in the face.*)

LITA. Excuse me. I am not very well.

CAPT. And have you nothing to say?

LITA. Nothing.

CAPT. But great Heaven! Am I to have no word, no single word of explanation? Am I to cast you out of my heart and my life like this? It shall not be so. I will first know the truth.

LITA. Why should I say words for your ears when your heart does not trust me?

CAPT. Trust you, in the face of all this; your strange conduct and your refusal to speak?

LITA. I do not ask for your confidence. People who do right are not beggars.

CAPT. And are you doing right?

LITA. I am.

CAPT. And you are innocent?

LITA. As a babe.

CAPT. And you do not and never have loved any man but me?

LITA. I never have.

CAPT. And you are as pure—(God forgive me, but I must ask it)—you are the same Lita that I have watched and known and loved all these months?

LITA. The same, so help me God.

CAPT. Then in the face of all I trust you. (*Clasping her in his arms.*)

LITA. Oh, my love! my love! if you knew what I have suffered. (*Her head lies on his shoulder, and she yields herself entirely.*)

CAPT. And you are mine, mine forever? (*She reaches her arms up about his neck and he gives her a long kiss.*) But now, dear, will you leave this place with me, leave it forever?

LITA. Not yet, love. It shall be as you wish very soon. But not yet. There must be a little time and then all will be well.

CAPT. How long?

LITA. Go, and come to-morrow at this time. I must have time to think and to plan.

CAPT. I cannot leave you to-night. Let your thoughts be my thoughts. Let us plan together, with the twin angels of love and hope to guide us in our counsel. Henceforth your trouble, whatever it be, is mine, and the man's shoulders should bear the burden, not the woman's.

LITA. No, love; you must be patient for a day.

CAPT. But I cannot leave you here, surrounded by a thousand dangers. Don Ramon is scouring the hills for your hiding place. The very thought that he might discover you is terrible. Do you think I can go home and lie down to sleep with my heart here, and with its idol in danger of being taken from me? You know I cannot.

LITA. And do you so much want me to come?

CAPT. Your own heart tells you that.

LITA. Oh, if I could only repay you. If I were only sure I should bring you no unhappiness. If I could only feel that there were nothing untold between us; that I were worthier of your love. And you will trust me, trust me unto death?

CAPT. Listen, love. You shall be my empress, my idol. Honored or slandered, you shall be the one glory of my life, the one thought in my death.

LITA. And you did not know——

CAPT. Know that you loved me?

LITA. Dear, do you remember the day when first you came into my life? Do you remember the canyon, in the shadow

of the white oak, by the pool where the lilies were growing? How the brown hills burned in the sun glare; how still it was in the heat of the noontide, and how only the bees hummed in the hazel, lulling all the world to a dream of the siesta. I was dreaming myself, I think, for you did not seem real as you looked at me so long and spoke to me so gently. It was so strange, so strange. Captain, I never knew I was a woman till then.

CAPT. My love.

LITA. Oh, if you knew, if you could only know the feeling here. (*Touching her heart.*) If you had known all my happiness when we rode together through the twilight: when we rested all alone in the deep woods; when we sailed over the summer ocean to the sea cave and you and I were together in the still silence of the great temple, with only the sleeping waters to watch us and listen to our words. It was so still, so beautiful. The touch of your hand made me tremble with happiness. The sound of your voice was music sweeter than any in all the world. Oh, dearie, I am so happy. (*Hides face on chest of* K.)

CAPT. And you will come?

LITA. To-morrow.

CAPT. To-morrow? To-night! Lita, look yonder. The old dead city lies white against the shadows of the night. Under the crumbling arches lie all that remains of the lips that lingered, the eyes that lightened, in the sleeping years long gone. Under the throbbing stars, in the midst of the burning roses, other lovers stood, hand in hand, looking seaward over the golden ocean that murmured love's music against the iron mountains that were flower-clad for them. And under the same moon that shines for us to-night did the grand law of human love lend ear to the petty plaint of fancied duty. Lita, my bride, come. Come to the sanctuary that shall be your home and my heaven. Come to a love that shall be longer than life, greater than death, that God himself shall bless and shall not sever. (*He holds his arms outstretched. She waits, then goes to him. They embrace, long. As she goes to him the four vaqueros steal in noiselessly.* C, *and surround the group, the* DON *and* MANUELO *in the center.*)

DON. Aim. (*The vaqueros aim at* CAPTAIN. *He springs back, putting* LITA *behind him with right hand and drawing revolver.*) Aim at him. Don't hit the girl.

CAPT. Cowards!

DON. The girl, or we fire. (DON *partly turns.* LITA *springs in front of* CAPTAIN.)

LITA. No, no. My God! You shall not.

DON. Give up that girl.

CAPT. Come and get her. Back, Lita.

LITA. (*Runs to* DON.) You shall not kill him. I will go with you. Do with me as you like, but spare him.

CAPT. Silence, Lita!

LITA. I will not be silent. I am not worth your life.

CAPT. Then die with me.

LITA. Die, yes. If it were only I. But you. Ah, God no. (*To* CAPTAIN.) See. All is not lost. I will go with them and you will save me. I know you will.

CAPT. They are but four——

DON. Fire if he stirs.

LITA. No, no. I will go. (*Runs to vaqueros.*) Here, take me; take me quick. (*Two of them take her and turn toward* C., *she looking back at* CAPTAIN. *Two remain with rifles pointed.* CAPTAIN *has a struggle with himself and falls into chair.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Exterior of wall of* DON RAMON'S *Hacienda. Large gate with wicket*, C. *Bell sounds within as curtain rises.* JOSE *opens gate. Orchestra plays low chorus strain as fifteen vaqueros come in in groups of three and four, some with bridles. They pass in saluting.* JOSE *shuts gate. Chorus heard within.*

[*Enter* CAPTAIN *disguised as tramp and* THOMAS R. 1 E. *They enter stealthily.*]

CAPT. Do I look like a tramp, Thomas?

THOS. Ye look more like a Ginral in disguise, sir.

CAPT. Sorry for that. Now remember: you are to wait in the grove with the horses; wait all night, if necessary.

THOS. Yes, sir.

CAPT. And if you do not hear from me, come back tomorrow night and wait till dawn.

THOS. I'll be there, sir; never fear. Good-by, Captain. (*Exit* THOMAS, *with salute.*)

CAPT. So, this is the casket they have chosen for the treasure that is mine; this is the fold in which the Spanish wolf guards so tenderly my lamb. Oh, God above, be with me! They have the law and the power, and I only a man's will and a man's strength. If I cannot save her I can die for her. But not before you, Don Ramon; not before you. But I must be cool; cool as man never was before. Once inside, the way is clear; but will they let me in? And I must beg for admission to yonder gate-keeper, when I could throttle him! (*Knocks at gate;* JOSE *slips back wicket.*)

JOSE. Who is it?

CAPT. Can a poor tramp get a night's lodging, sir?

JOSE. We admit no strangers here.

CAPT. That's pretty rough. I only want a crust and a blanket. I never heard of a California ranch that wouldn't give it.

JOSE. Where are you from?

CAPT. Los Angeles.

JOSE. Where are you going?

CAPT. Anywhere. Looking for work.

JOSE. (*Opens gate.*) Well, come in. You'll have to sleep by the fire, though. You can't go inside the house.

CAPT. I'm used to roughing it. (*Enters; gate closes.*)

[*Scene moves off, disclosing court-yard of hacienda, with gate at* R. H. *Doors at* C. F. *and* L. H. *Veranda about court-yard above doors. Doors and windows opening on veranda. Watch-fire at* L. C. *Bell-frame and rope* L. U. E. CAPTAIN *and* JOSE *discovered seated on ground beside fire.*]

JOSE. What news do you bring across country?

CAPT. None at all. I only know that the days are warm and the nights are cold. By, Jove! the night is cold. (*Draws canteen from blouse and uncorks it.*) Have a drink?

JOSE. No; can't drink on watch.

CAPT. Well, here's luck! (*Pretends to take long drink and smacks lips.*) That's the stuff to keep the cold out.

JOSE. What is it?

CAPT. Brandy; Baldwin's. Great liquor, ain't it?

JOSE. (*Looking warily around.*) Gimme a drop.

[CAPTAIN *hands him canteen. He uncorks it, and is about to drink, when there is a double knock at gate.*]

JOSE. Take it, quick! That's Don Ramon! (*Rises and goes to gate.*)

CAPT. Don Ramon! (*Springs to feet; then drops by fire, as if asleep.*)

[JOSE *opens gate;* DON *enters* R. H.]

DON. Hello! Jose. It's a little cold out.

JOSE. (*Closing gate.*) Yes, Senor.

[DON *starts across stage for* L. H., *and espies* CAPTAIN. *Stops.*]

DON. Who is that?

JOSE. Tramp, Senor.

DON. What did you let him in for? I told Father Sepulveda to admit no one.

JOSE. He didn't tell me, sir. Couldn't turn him away.

DON. Well, all right: but take care of him. By-the-way, did a man come to-day with a card?

JOSE. Yes, sir. He's with the Priest.

DON. Very well; good night. (*Exit* L. H.)

JOSE. Now, give me a drink. (*Takes canteen and drinks long.*) Madre de Dios! that's fine brandy.

CAPT. (*Corking canteen.*) So, so. Life is pretty slow here, isn't it?

JOSE. Oh, there's work enough. That gate keeps me busy all day—and night, too, sometimes.

CAPT. That is a heavy gate; needs oiling, too; that would

make it twice as easy for you. Got any oil? I'll earn my lodging.

JOSE. (*Toying with canteen.*) There's some on the shelf there.

[CAPTAIN *goes and gets oil from bell-frame; goes to gate and oils hinges and bolts, looking around every few seconds.* JOSE *does comedy business with flask, fearful of being discovered in taking repeated drinks.* CAPTAIN *finally draws all bolts and opens gate warily; then leaves it nearly closed; returns.*]

CAPT. Now, old boy, that'll ease your work for you.

JOSE. What's that? (*Listening to footsteps.*)

CAPT. Sh-h! Give it to me. There's some one coming. (*Pretends to sleep.*)

[*Enter* DON *and* MANUELO *with lantern*, R. D. F. *They converse in low tones down stage.*]

DON. I have the pardon. What do you think?

MAN. (*Reads by lantern and shakes head.*) Whose pardon was it?

DON. I forget; some old one. I merely erased the name and put in his.

MAN. That's violating the law, mutilating a public document.

DON. Oh, there's not an atom of danger. The pardon depends upon his immediately quitting the State. So he's out of the way. If he makes any fuss, he knows that he goes back to prison for life as an escape, and the testimony of a convict will scarcely bother a millionaire. Besides, as soon as I go to Sacramento I will get the original of this, and that will end all danger.

MAN. Just as you say; but I wouldn't do it.

DON. I've got to; I've got to get that guarantee I gave him. That was foolish, I admit; that would compromise me. Is he inside?

MAN. Yes; I'll call him. (*Exit* MANUELO C. F.)

DON. A few hours! a few hours! Ah! little brown eyes, what a gallant lover you shall have; what days among the lilies and what nights among the roses! (K., *on one elbow, watches like a cat, ready to spring.*)

[*Enter* ALBERTO C. F.]

DON. Here is your document.

BER. It's all straight, is it? No funny business?

DON. All straight, sir. Signed by Governor Irwin and sealed with the Great Seal of State.

BER. (*Examines it, nods, and folds it up.*) Here's your guarantee.

DON. (*Reads guarantee.*) Now, a word with you: This pardon depends on your quitting the State as soon as possible. The quickest way is the steamer at San Diego on Saturday afternoon. If any officer of the steamer stops you, show him your pardon. You will have no trouble. Here's a hundred dollars; that will see you through. Now, you'd better go to bed and start at dawn.

BER. Thanks, Senor; I'll go. (*Exit both* C. F.)

CAPT. (*Aside.*) I'd like to know what that all means. Some more villainy, I'll bet. (*To* JOSE, *shaking him.*) Here, take another. (JOSE *drinks, sleepily.*)

CAPT. I say, old boy! Wake up! (*Jose wakes.*) You've got a pretty girl here—a stranger.

JOSE. (*Bracing up.*) Oh, no, you're wrong.

CAPT. Get out. I saw her at a window when I came.

JOSE. No girl; no girl at all here. (CAPT. *snatches flask from him.*)

CAPT. You'll lie to me, will you.

JOSE. Oh, hold on. Don't be stingy. Yes, there is a girl here. Some picnic of Don Ramon's.

CAPT. (*Losing control of himself.*) What! where is her room? (*Jose shakes head and murmurs.*)

CAPT. Oh, you sot. Here, wake up, I say. Tell me where she is. (*Shakes him.*)

JOSE. I won't tell you.

CAPT. Tell me.

JOSE. No, no, won't tell.

CAPT. (*Closing hand on Jose's throat.*) Tell me! Tell me quick?

JOSE. Santa Maria! Mercy! You would not murder me!

CAPT. Tell me her room.

JOSE. You are no tramp. What do you want? Help!

[CAPTAIN *grabs him again and chokes him till he is quiet, then lifts him and pours liquor down throat.* JOSE *gulps it and falls in stupor, insensible.* CAPTAIN *drags him into dark corner* R. U. E., *first slashing keys from belt and covers him with straw.*]

CAPT. Now for the last stroke! Lita, my love, you are saved! (*Starts for* C. F. *Door opens and* LITA *appears. At sight of* CAPTAIN, *she screams. He falls by fire asleep in old position.* LITA *is followed close by two torch bearers and* MANUELO.)

MAN. What are you screaming at?

LITA. I — I — it was a bird; a great bird with big eyes flew at me.

MAN. Pshaw! An owl!

[*Enter* DON, C. F.]

DON. Was it an owl, though? (*Takes torch and inspects courtyard, passing near* JOSE. *Then goes to* CAPTAIN *and thrusts torch in his face. Returns to group.*) Where is Jose?

MAN. He's in bed, long ago. (*Group cross stage and exit,* L. H. *Door closes with click.*)

CAPT. (*Rises.*) Yes, you go, but I follow. (*Rushes to door. Springs back.*) My God! it's locked. And the priest has the key. Oh, this is too much! But wait. He must return, and then—his life or the key.

[*Scene discovers room in hacienda containing single bed, table and two chairs. Enter* MANUELO *left boxing. He places lighted candle on table and turns to door.* LITA *enters and walks to chair. Sits.*]

MAN. Good night, Senorita. Don Ramon will be here in a few moments. (*Exit* MANUELO *left boxing.*)

LITA. It was he. I knew it was he. And he has come to save me. Oh, if he had not. They will kill him; they are certain to. But let them. (*Rises.*) You do it, Don Ramon; you do it, and you will find a girl's arm can avenge if it cannot save. (*Breathes hard, checks herself suddenly, and sits as door opens.* DON *enters.*)

LITA. So, Don Ramon, it is you who looks so tenderly after the ward of the church?

DON. (*Very tenderly and courteously.*) Yes, senorita, and it is I who am grieved to see the necessary efforts for a young lady's welfare repulsed with such ill grace.

LITA. (*Bitterly.*) Efforts for her welfare!

DON. (*Bows.*) That is what I said.

LITA. Don Ramon, it will be as well to speak frankly. Your diplomacies and courtesies are as detestable to me as they are meaningless to yourself. You have chosen, by an unlawful extension of the temporal power of the church, to outrage right and imprison me. Now what do you propose to do? What do you want?

DON. Pardon me, my child.

LITA. I am not your child. I am not of your family or your religion. I owe you and yours no reverence. I yield them nothing but contempt.

DON. Even those who are most ungracious we still hope to reclaim.

LITA. Come to the point, sir. Converts are not made nowadays with carbines, nor proselytes with pistols. I want to know why I am here. I want to know why an unoffending girl who never did any one harm, is watched, pursued, and arrested at the beck of a man she never saw, and in the name of a church to which she never swore allegiance. Tell me or open that door. I will know.

DON. Will not is not said to me, senorita.

LITA. But it will be said. If I may not say it men will. The days of chivalry may be dead, but the days of manhood are not, thank God. (*He takes chair and sits near her.*)

DON. Lita, have not the crystal mirrors of your own canyons—have not the flowers that bend to you as you walk abroad—have not the rough-handed, bashful lovers of the vintage ever told you?

LITA. Told me what.

DON. That the sea swallow is less graceful, that an angel is less lovely than you.

LITA. What do you mean? (*Nervously.*)

DON. I mean, Lita, that it is many days since I saw you first. You were sitting on the sand, your eyes gazing seaward, dreaming with a maiden's idle fancy of the unknown future. You were very lovely, there, Lita. (*Comes closer.* Very lovely, my child, and the picture—— (*Reaches for her hand.*)

LITA. Stop, sir. This is no place nor time for lovers' tales. Were you a man instead of a scoundrel you would not insult a prisoner with such words.

DON. Lita, I have wealth. I have power. A palace, such as few women see, shall be yours. The looms of Europe shall clothe you; the jewels of the south

LITA. Spare your tinsel bribes. I want no palace, no jewels. I want my freedom.

DON. Am I then so repulsive to you? Other women have not found me so.

LITA. I pity them, then. I pity any woman who was ever tainted with the touch of your vile hand.

DON. You use hard words, my lady.

LITA. Yes, but not half hard enough. A snake has more honor, a cur more manhood. Oh, how I despise you!

DON. Very well, then, my spitfire. Since you appear to enjoy it you shall despise me still more. Those pretty lips lash cuttingly. Let us see if they will taste as sweetly. (*As he speaks he advances. She recedes to wall. At last word he seizes her arm.*)

LITA. Let me go. (*She whips out dagger. He snatches it, drops it, and seizes her.*) Stop! Help! Oh, my God! mercy!

They struggle, he endeavoring to force her head on his shoulder. The door is burst in and CAPTAIN *enters* L. DON *releases her.*)

DON. You!

CAPT. Yes, I. (*Springs at* DON. *They wrestle.* CAPTAIN *gets* DON *on floor with hands on* DON'S *throat.* CAPTAIN *grabs knife; raises it to strike.*)

LITA. Wait. He is not worthy death. (*She seizes* CAPTAIN'S *arm and tries to pull him off.*) Come, the vaqueros will be here in a moment.

CAPT. You are right. It's death or freedom, now. Follow me. No. Here. (*Lifts her on left arm. draws pistol with right, blows out candle and dashes out left boxing.*)

[*Scene moves off disclosing Court-yard.* FIRST VAQUERO *discovered ringing bell sharply. Vaqueros in pants and red shirts open at breast, with feet bare, rush out from various entrances. Some throw up windows and appear at upper doors on veranda running. All group about* FIRST VAQUERO. *All armed with clubs, scythe blades, or knives.*]

ALL. What's the row? What's the row? What's the matter?

FIRST VAQ. The devil is loose. Jose drunk. The Priest bound and gagged, and Don Ramon murdered.

ALL. Who did it? Where is he?

FIRST VAQ. He's there. In there, I tell you. Quick, don't let him get away. (*He waves his hand indicating* L. 2 E. *All rush in* L. 2 E.)

JOSE. (*Staggers out of corner with straw clinging to him.*) Hic. Whash 'er row?

FIRST VAQ. Get out, you sot! (*Pushes him over.* JOSE *falls and does not stir or speak.* FIRST VAQUERO *runs to* L. 2 E. *and meets vaqueros backing slowly out with yells.* CAPTAIN *appears with* LITA *on arm and pistol leveled. Yells.*)

CAPT. Back, you dogs. Get back.

ALL. Carramba? Carajo! Kill him! Knock him down, there! Get behind him! Kill him! (*Those on outside of group endeavor to strike him over heads of others.*)

FIRST VAQ. The gate. The gate is open. (*He springs to ward gate.* CAPTAIN *fires and he falls.* CAPTAIN *fires twice, vaqueros fall back and he dashes through gate.*)

[CURTAIN.]

ACT IV.

SCENE—*Parlors of Horton House, San Diego. Windows* R. *and* L. *at back showing view of ocean. Doors* L. 3 E., R. 4 E. *and* R. 2 E. *Table* C. *with writing materials. Piano with gaudy cover between doors* R. *At* R. *large arm chair. At* C. *tete-a-tete. At* L. *sofa, light parlor chairs, etc. Tall mirror between windows. Mariquita discovered dusting, back of stage.*

[*Enter* TIM, L. 3 E. *Comes down stage and does not see her. She comes up behind him and puts hands over eyes.*]

MAR. Who is it?

TIM. Faix, from the size o' the hands I think it's the Arizona giantess. (*She boxes his ears.*)

TIM. Is the Captain here yet?

MAR. He'll be here in half an hour, with a lady. They have three elegant rooms.

TIM. That's two more than we'll be wantin', Mrs. Mariquita Reardon.

MAR. Have you got the hundred dollars yet? You must get that before I marry you.

TIM. Feast yer avaricious eyes on that, ye pawnbroker. (*Holds up three twenties.*)

MAR. That's only sixty.

TIM. Ye mercenary divil. I'll give ye my note for the balance.

MAR. No. (*Shaking her head.*)

TIM. An' what do ye want wid so much? Is it a carriage and horses yer after?

MAR. (*Counting on fingers.*) I want a silk dress, and some shoes, and a hat, and some diamond earrings, and a scarf, and a breastpin, and a watch and chain, and—what's the matter?

TIM. Oh, go on. Don't moind me.

MAR. And some candy and—where'll we live?

TIM. Faix, I'm thinking we'll camp out, and hide the diamonds in a squirrel hole wid a burglar alarm on it.

MAR. You poke fun at me?

TIM. Oh, not at all; not at all, darlin'. Only I'll have to be married in me old swally-tail, and me silk socks is worn out up to the ankles. But don't moind me. Only I'd just be askin' the favor that if ye want the earth at any time ye'll let me know the day before. Good-by, darlin'. (*Through the half-*

closed door). Jist dhrop into the jeweler's an' tell him ye know me. (*Exit* TIM L. 3 E.)

MAR. And a feather, a big yellow one, in the hat, and—I'll give a kettle-drum some time, like all the brides. (*Taking piano cloth and putting it around her, en train, and walking before mirror.*)

[*Enter* BERTO, L. 3. E. *Mariquita drops cloth and dusts vigorously.*]

BER. I want to see the young lady, the lady with Captain Kingsbury.

MAR. She's not here yet. She won't be here till 12 o'clock. You better come after she's married.

BER. Married!

MAR. Yes, they will be married this afternoon.

BER. I'd like to see her before that.

MAR. Well, you better wait. (*Exit* MARIQUITA.)

BER. Well, I suppose it's better for her. It ain't my fault that the Captain got her. No, let 'em rip. To-morrow the steamer. To-day good-bye.

[*Enter* ISABELLA, L. 3 E..]

ISA. You! again?

BER. You don't seem delighted to see me.

ISA. On the contrary, you are the one man that ought to be seen just now. Do you know you are being tricked and fooled all around?

BER. Me tricked? Ain't my pardon all right?

ISA. What! Did the priest get you a pardon?

BER. Yes.

ISA. To get you out of the country. Wasn't that it?

BER. Yes, that's so. What do you mean?

ISA. Simply this: The Captain and your lady love are going to be married to-day, and you are going to lose a fortune.

BER. A fortune. How!

ISA. Lita is rich; very rich. She inherits a fortune in Mexico from the old woman whose husband left it to her. The priest is after it, the Captain is after it, and the Captain will get it.

BER. Carramba! He shall not. He shall not marry her.

ISA. Can you prevent this marriage?

BER. I will do it, somehow.

ISA. She is in love with you, isn't she?

BER. Yes; why?

ISA. I understand it; I know she's going to marry the Captain on your account. Now you go to her; tell her you

don't want her to marry him; tell her she will be a disgrace to him after her life with you; that his people would find it out and refuse to receive her. You understand? Then get her to come with you, take the steamer to-morrow, and you can be rich and happy in Mexico.

BER. You're right; I'll do it. But wait; the Captain won't stand it.

ISA. I'll fix the Captain. He will be glad to get rid of her; you can rest assured of that. Now you write her a note, and send it to her as soon as she arrives, telling her you want to see her. Will you do it?

BER. I will; I'll do it now.

ISA. She won't betray you? I can rely on that?

BER. You can; she'll never betray me. (*Exit* ISABELLA L. 3 E.)

BER. (*Writes note, folds and addresses it.*) So, that's the game. Playing me, are they? Good God! suppose the pardon is bogus. (*Hastily takes pardon from pocket and inspects it.*) The paper is not new; this is an old one; I have been tricked; they will jail me. My God! they may be on my track now. But, no; the signature is here, the seal is here, my name is here. It's mighty strange. I must know! I must know! (*Thinks*) I can't go to the police; I must go to a lawyer. But who? Ah! the Irishman; he's the man. He'll know, and he dassent give me away. Lita first, and then the lawyer. (*Exit* BERTO L. 3 E.)

[*Enter* MARIQUITA, CAPTAIN *and* LITA, R. 2 E.]

MAR. You are to have the main parlor, Captain. The ladies' rooms are there; yours is here.

CAPT. Thanks. (*Exit* MARIQUITA R. 2 E.) My love! (*Kisses* LITA.)

LITA. Why, Captain! I have not even washed my hands.

CAPT. So your ablutions are more important than my happiness, you little Mohammedan..

LITA. What's a Mohammedan?

CAPT. (*Seriously*) A Mohammedan? Well, I'll tell you some time; but you must be sure and not tell anybody (*laughing*). You little darling!

LITA. I thought you had to see Mr. Straine, immediately, without a moment's delay. (*Dram. burlesque.*)

CAPT. So I have; and it's very important. We must be married without any delay.

LITA. Without a trousseau?

CAPT. (*Laughing.*) Without a single pillow-sham or a lavender wrapper. It's rough on us poor things, isn't it?

LITA. Dearie, I wish you would go and see him. I'm afraid those men will give us more trouble.

CAPT. I will. Good-bye, you darling! I'll be back in five minutes with the parson. (*Snatches kiss and starts.*)

[*Enter* MARIQITA L. 3 E.]

MAR. A letter for the lady, sir.

LITA. A letter for me?

MAR. Yes, Senorita. (*Hands it to her; she starts slightly.*)

CAPT. What is it, love?

LITA. Nothing; a letter from Marie.

CAPT. What does she want?

LITA. I don't know, yet.

CAPT. Well, I must be going. Mariquita, show this lady to her room and attend to her; carefully, mind you. (*Slyly slips her a gold piece.*)

MAR. Never fear. (*Throwing a kiss to him.*) (*Aside.*) Ah, I must marry a military man. (CAPTAIN *has made a hasty exit* L. 3 E. LITA *looks at letter long and then breaks seal; reads and makes gesture of despair, falling into arm-chair. Is silent.*)

MAR. Will the Senorita come to her room?

LITA. Who gave you this?

MAR. A man outside.

LITA. Did he say there was an answer?

MAR. He said he would wait.

LITA. Tell him—(*aside*) oh, this is so unfortunate. (*Aloud.*) Tell him I will see him at 1 o'clock. Tell him to come to the side entrance.

MAR. Where will the Senorita see him?

LITA. Here.

MAR. Very well, Senorita. (*Opening door* R. 2 E.) This is your room. (*Exit both through door.*)

[*Enter* ISABELLA L. 3 E. *Looks about.*]

ISA. They are not here. He is in her room, I suppose; in there; in that room with her. (*Impulsively rushes to door; stops; puts her hand on her heart.*) I am a fool; a school-girl.

[*Enter* MARIQUITA R. 3 E.]

MAR. The Captain will be back directly, madam. (*Starts for door*, L. 3 E.)

ISA. Stay. Did you, did you see them together?

MAR. Who?

ISA. The Captain and the lady.

MAR. (*Cunningly.*) Yes, ma'am. They are awful happy.

He said he loved her more than any woman he had ever seen.

ISA. He did, did he. (*Rises impulsively, twisting handkerchief.*)

MAR. Here is the Captain. (*Opens door*, L. 3. E. *Enter* CAPTAIN. *Exit* MARIQUITA.)

CAPT. Miss Valdez.

ISA. Yes, Captain. You are glad to see me again, are you not?

CAPT. Most assuredly. But after our parting— (*Sits.*)

ISA. (*Laughing.*) Yes, I know. I had a splitting headache that day, and would have quarreled with my own mother. But we were too good friends to be made enemies by such a trifle.

CAPT. We are still friends, I trust. (*Aside.*) What the devil is she after?

ISA. Certainly, and it is purely as a friend I come here. It is a little impulsive, I know, but I am a spoiled child. Captain, do you still retain your chivalrous interest in that orphan?

CAPT. I must say I do.

ISA. Well; that is why I came. I came to tell you she is not a proper person.

CAPT. (*Springs to feet.*) What!

ISA. Why, Captain?

CAPT. Explain that phrase.

ISA. Believe me, Captain, I did not know your interest went so far.

CAPT. You must explain your words.

ISA. I shall not. You love this girl. You have her full confidence, of course. You cannot listen to anything against her.

CAPT. (*Emotional struggle.*) I must know what you would say. I yield no atom of my trust in her. Remember that. Now what have you to say against this lady?

ISA. Against her, nothing. Against the woman who would foist herself upon a gentleman as his wife, much.

CAPT. Take care. Her insults are mine.

ISA. I will take care. She received a letter this morning. Who was it from?

CAPT. From Marie.

ISA. Who cannot write. Your sweetheart's correspondents are scarcely illiterate peasantry. Do you imagine you are the first man she ever loved?

CAPT. I know that no man or woman shall insult her name and go unpunished.

ISA. Yes, you would stop me with force. Crush a bitter

pill because you cannot swallow it. Tell me this. Who was the man living with her in the cave? (*Business of* CAPTAIN.) You do not know? You should know. Go and ask the woman who is to be your wife. You cannot get her confidence. You cannot make her confess.

CAPT. Confess what?

ISA. That that man was her lover, as I can prove.

CAPT. (*Seizing her shoulders.*) Unsay those words or——

ISA. (*Handing him stiletto.*) Take it and kill me if I do not speak the truth.

CAPT. If.

ISA. Yes if. I am no slanderer weaving a calumny. I am no dealer in gossip or lies. I am telling you fact; hard, pitiless fact. You love this girl. You are blind, as men ever were. She loves this convict, this assassin, and she will marry you to save him. Go and ask her. If she prove guiltless and I a liar, then compensate yourself as you will.

CAPT. I will ask her. Not to prove her purity, but to prove your shame.

[CAPTAIN *stands erect, looking at her. She bows low in sign of assent and walks to door* L. 3 E. *Exits.*]

CAPT. It cannot be; it cannot be. I should have killed her before listening. And yet this mystery; this awful, horrible mystery. Lita, Lita, my love! Why are you not here to confront her and shame her with the light of your pure soul? (*Opening doors.*) Lita, where are you? (*Seizes hat and goes rapidly to door, where he meets* TIM *with huge bouquet and dandified smile.*)

TIM. Mahnin to ye, Captain.

[CAPTAIN *rushes by him, dashing down bouquet without seeing it. Exit* CAPTAIN.]

TIM. Faix, that's the way he threats me lady's posies, is it? (*Picking up bouquet and trying to smooth flowers.*) The petunias is all smashed and the pantoxydermidons is knocked out of time. Begorra, I can't make her a presint o' that smash-up. I ll go an' rob another conservatory, and the Captain'll pay for it, be jabers! (*Exit* L. 3 E.)

[*Enter* LITA *and* BERTO R. 2 E.]

LITA. How am I the cause of your trouble, Berto? How can I save you? (*They sit,* BERTO *arm-chair,* LITA *tete a tete.*)

BER. Lita, do you know you are very rich?

LITA. I, rich? Why, the idea!

BER. It's true. Old Josefa's husband had property; you

inherit it as her heir; it's in Mexico. Now, I want you to go there with me and get the property. I will have money enough to get a pardon. I shall be a free man, and we will both be happy.

LITA. And leave him?

BER. Leave who?

LITA. Captain Kingsbury, the man who saved me.

BER. And who saved you for what? To marry you for your property.

LITA. You shall not speak of him so.

BER. All right; I see how it is. Well, good-bye, Lita. I am going to give myself up. There's no show for me. (*Rises.*)

LITA. No, Berto; forgive me. You shall not do that; but be reasonable.

BER. Reasonable? How can I? Put yourself in my place. It will be best for you—best for us both to go.

LITA. And this was my happiest day! This the day when hope and happiness and love were all within my grasp. Oh! Berto! Berto! You don't know what you ask. Say you don't. Do not ask me to do this for you. Berto, brother, please.

BER. And why should you not? Do you not see? You feel naturally that you owe much to the man who is striving tooth and nail for you because he knows the fortune behind you. What does he care for you? You will marry him simply out of gratitude.

LITA. I will not.

BER. Then why?

LITA. I will marry him because I love him. Because he wishes me to. Because I owe him my life and he shall have it. You have gone too far. As long as you ask of me you shall have all in my power to grant. But when you go out of your way to insult the noblest of men, you strike him and me a cruel blow, and I will not stand it from you or any man.

BER. (*Sneeringly.*) So you are going to marry him?

LITA. I am. I swear it. As soon as he shall say the word I will be his wife.

BER. You, marry him! You, the sister of an assassin! He a Kingsbury of Virginia. You, the friend and companion of a murderer. He, an honored officer, of high social position. Do you think that because you love him and he is a fool, that he is not going to ruin himself just the same? Do you suppose, after the honeymoon wears off and he is a little more clear-sighted, that he isn't going to regret? Do you suppose he can take you home to his family without those proud women asking who and what you are? Do you think he is going to be proud of his convict's sister bride, and not lie

awake nights fearing the shame, the disgrace, of the exposure? You love him, do you? Then why put a chain around his neck to drag him down?

LITA. (*Passing hand across brow vacantly.*) My God! I never—thought—of—that.

BER. And will you marry him?

LITA. Oh, no. I must not marry him! It would be horrible—horrible—horrible. (*She stares at vacancy.*)

BER. What is the matter? (*She staggers. He catches her and places her in chair. Business of neck and glass of water. She recovers.*)

BER. You see, Lita, he does not know I am your brother. He does not imagine anything low clings to you. And he needn't know. You can go away quietly. He will remember you as a dear friend, perhaps, who interested him. He never will know your disgrace.

LITA. No. He must never know. He must never know my disgrace.

BER. Then come, quick; I hear his footstep. (*She tries to rise.*) Quick. You don't want to see him. (*She falls back in chair. He darts into room*, R. 2 E.)

[*Enter* CAPTAIN *and* STRAINE, L. 3 E. LITA's *back is to the door.* CAPTAIN *is gloomy.*]

CAPT. (*Coming over and kissing her on forehead.*) Ah, Lita, dear. I have been looking everywhere for you. What is the matter? Are you ill? (LITA *shakes hear head.*)

CAPT. Wait a moment, dear, and then tell me all about it. I have some important business with Straine. You will excuse me? (LITA *nods her head.* CAPT. *goes over to* STRAINE. *Both sit at table.*)

CAPT. You say there's trouble?

STR. Yes, lots. Priest fellow; legal guardian. Can't get around it.

CAPT. I can marry her.

STR. Exactly—right off. Ring bells—no delay!

CAPT. What can he do?

STR. Injunction—legal guardian—claim her! Get Sheriff to take her away. No time to loose. What are you waiting for?

CAPT. I want to have a talk with her.

STR. Talk—bosh! Talk her to death afterward. If you you don't, she'll talk you. Married man myself.

CAPT. (*Thoughtfully.*) You are right. You have the license?

STR. Yes, all right. Tie you tight as glue—too tight. *(Shaking his head.)* Tried it myself.

CAPT. Well, go and get a minister, and have him ready at a moment's notice at your office. Will you do that for me?

STR. Keep him there if I have to tie him. Don't wait long. No cards—no cake—no wine—no nothing! Good bye. I'll get him. Good bye. (*Exit* STRAINE, L. 3 E.)

[CAPTAIN *crosses over behind chair, and kisses her tenderly on forehead. She shows no sign of feeling. He sits beside her and takes her hand.*]

CAPT. Lita, before to-day's sun sets you will be my wife; mine to honor, guard and protect forever. Whatever secrets stand between us now I am willing to leave as they are until your own true heart shall choose to reveal them. They have worried me, I admit. They are worrying you now; that I see. I only wanted to tell you, that you need have no anxiety now or forever. I trust you wholly, implicitly, my love, my wife. (*He leans over to put his arm around her. She gently and sadly puts his hands away with hers.*)

LITA. Captain Kingsbury, I can never be your wife.

CAPT. What is this?

LITA. This is our last meeting. This hour we part forever.

CAPT. Because you love some other man?

LITA. Because I love you as no woman ever did; as no woman ever will.

CAPT. But, Lita, this is maddening. You say one thing in words,, another in acts. For God's sake, explain; for God's sake, say something.

LITA. I can tell you nothing.

CAPT. Lita, I implore you; for the sake of our love, for the sake of our two lives. Oh, Lita, darling! do not be so mad, so cruel. It shall make no difference to me; it shall not change my love. Only tell me, and say you will not leave me now.

LITA. It is impossible.

CAPT. Who is this man? (*Seizing bell.*) Quick! Mariquita will know.

LITA. Oh, do not ring. (*Endeavoring to grasp bell, which he holds from her.*)

CAPT. He sent you a letter this morning?

LITA. Yes, he did.

CAPT. Did you see him?

LITA. Oh, my God! what shall I do? What shall I say?

CAPT. Answer me.

LITA. I did. I told him to come here. He talked to me and went away.

CAPT. He did not; he was with you when I came.

LITA. No, no; he was not.

CAPT. He was. He is here. Thank God! he is here. (*Starts for door* R. 2 E.)

LITA. Captain, pity me. For God's sake! do not go there. (*Seizing his knees.*)

CAPT. Let go.

LITA. You must not! My God, you must not!

CAPT. Let go, I say. (*Endeavors to loosen her grasp.*)

LITA. Captain! Captain! do not. I will tell you all.

CAPT. (*Breaking loose.*) Who is this man? You tell me, or he shall——

LITA. He is— my brother!

CAPT. Nonsense. You have gone too far for that.

LITA. My, God! you don't doubt *that?*

CAPT. And who is your brother, that he should affect you thus?

LITA. My brother is a convict; a murderer; a hunted dog. You have my secret now. I have degraded myself in your eyes, and I wanted to go away so that yot you never would know it. I wanted to close my eyes and die with the thought that you still loved me; that you still respected me. (*Hides face and sobs.* CAPTAIN *sits at table in thought.*)

CAPT. Poor little heart; faithful little heart. I see it all, now. (*Goes to her.*) Lita, I want to ask you something. (*She still sobs. He takes her face, twists it around toward him.*) Lita, did you think I wanted to marry the whole family?

LITA. But—you marry *his* sister.

CAPT. I would marry you if twin devils stood on either side and claimed you as their child. Now, go, love, quickly, and prepare for the bridal. Come, there is no time to lose. And, Lita, ask my brother-in-law to step in here.

[*Exit* LITA R. 2 E. *Enter* BERTO R. 2 E. CAPTAIN *has seated himself at table.*]

CAPT. You are Alberto Molino, the escaped convict?

BER. You've called the turn.

CAPT. You want to get safely out of the State, don't you?

BER. Perhaps I do, and perhaps I don't.

CAPT. Well, there's a steamer leaves for Mexico to-morrow afternoon. You take it, or in ten minutes afterward you'll be behind the bars.

BER. Well, I ain't scared of you or your soldiers. You can't scare me (*tapping his pocket*).

CAPT. If you prefer, I will lock you up now.

BER. You can't do it, mister. But you needn't try, all the same. Ta, ta, Captain. (*Exit* L. 3 E.)

CAPT. The scoundrel! Where have I met him? He's no kin to her; I'll swear that, whatever she believes. And he says I can't lock him up? He must have a pardon. I must look into this. His hold over her makes him important. I must keep track of him. (*Rings bell and writes. Enter* MARIQUITA L. 3 E.) Take this telegram to the office. It is to the Governor of the State, and must go immediately. And, stay—if Mr. Straine is below tell him to come without delay.

MAR. Yes, Senor. (*Exit* L. 3 E.)

[*Enter* LITA *in bridal vail* R. 2 E.]

CAPT. Now, love, all is ready.

[*Enter* STRAINE *and* MINISTER L. 3 E. *Orchestra begins wedding march, pianissimo.*]

STR. There you are, parson. Tie 'em up; tie 'em up. No time to lose.

[CAPTAIN *and* LITA *stand in front of* MINISTER, *holding hands.*]

CAPT. You better bolt the door, Straine. (STRAINE *bolts door* L. 3 E.)

MIN. Do you, William Atherton Kingsbury, take this woman to be your wedded wife, to love, honor and protect in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, through all your life?

CAPT. I do.

[*During these two speeches there has been a running and trampling without.*]

SHERIFF. Open the door!

CAPT. Go on, sir; lose no time.

MIN. Do you, Carmelita, take this man——

SHER. Open, or we break in the door.

CAPT. Go on, for God's sake, quickly!

MIN. To be your wedded husband?

LITA. I do.

MIN. Then, in the name——

[*The door is burst in. The* SHERIFF, DON, PRIEST, MARIQUITA *and* TIM *enter. The* SHERIFF *runs to* MINISTER *and places his hand over his mouth.*]

SHER. Stop, in the name of the law.

CAPT. What means this imterference?

SHER. I am Sheriff of this county. Upon affidavit that the girl Carmelita was about to marry illegally, without the consent of her guardian, a writ has been issued directing me to take her into custody.

CAPT. Oh, you villains!

DON. Do your duty, Sheriff.

CAPT. What? You will not take her away?

DON. You cannot refuse, Sheriff. (*As he speaks he steps forward.*)

CAPT. Stand back, scoundrel! Stand back, or you drop in your tracks.

SHER. Keep cool, gentlemen; no weapons, please. I am very sorry, Captain; very sorry. But I must take this young lady from you.

CAPT. Sheriff, see here: You and I have been pretty good friends. Do me this favor: Give me custody of her for twenty-four hours.

SHER. I'd like to oblige you, Captain; but I don't see how.

CAPT. Swear me as your deputy for that time.

SHER. Will you have her here without marrying her? On honor?

CAPT. On my honor as a man.

DON. You shall not. It is unlawful. It is an outrage.

SHER. You dry up. I'm Sheriff of this county, and I know my business. Captain, take her. For twenty-four hours she is yours.

[CURTAIN.]

ACT V.

SCENE—*Law office of* STRAINE. *Doors* L. 3 E., R. D. F. *and* L. D. F. *Windows* R. 2 E. *and* R. 4 E. *Desk between doors at back. Table between windows. Book case, papers, writing materials, etc., on desk. Curtain discovers* TIM *reading law book, with his feet at painful angle on top of desk.*

TIM. (*Reading.*) Cedant arma togae, concedat laurea linguae. Cede Dominum. Wirra wirra! My jaw's broke! I'll nivir be a lawyer. Dominum. Dominum. Now what the divil's Dominum? It's damnin 'em I am. Why can't the Judges talk Irish. Faix every statesman and policeman 'ud know law thin; that is, av they could read. (*Knock at door.*) Come in.

[*Enter* ALBERTO, L. 3 E.]

BER. Are you a lawyer?

TIM. An' do I look like a horse jockey? Howly mother! It's you, is it?

BER. Sh-h—I don't want any talk. I'll pay you well.

TIM. Divil a word. I'll bate the Spinx.

BER. I have a pardon here. It belongs to a friend of mine. I want to know if it's good; that's all. (*Shows paper.*)

TIM. Hand it here.

BER. Not much. It don't go out of my hands. (TIM *looks over his shoulder and reads.*)

TIM. So that's a pardon.

BER. Of course. Isn't it?

TIM. Av coorse. That's what I said. (*Aside.*) An' I don't know a pardon from a bill poster.

BER. But is it a good one? That's what I want to know. How long will it take you to find out?

TIM. (*Aside.*) The ould man 'll be here in a jiffy. (*Aloud.*) Just give me the name there, an' I'll go an' sarch the records.

BER. Molino—Alberto Molino. (TIM *writes it.*)

TIM. Call in a quarter 'av an hour an' I'll tell you.

BER. All right. Keep mum and you shall have this. (*Holding up twenty dollar piece.*)

TIM. Nivir fear. (*Exit* BERTO, L. 3 E.) Twinty dollars. Twinty an' sixty is ninety; that is, if I tache arithmetic to Mrs. Reardon, an' she takes a romantic view av it.

[*Enter* CAPTAIN *and* STRAINE R. D. F. CAPTAIN *sits at table.* STRAINE *in chair.*]

STR. Seen Lita this morning?

CAPT. Yes. She has not closed her eyes, and is pale as a ghost. If this lasts much longer she'll go to pieces.

STR. Poor child. Hard case, very.

CAPT. Can nothing be done at law?

STR. Nothing. We can fight 'em—injunctions; writs; all that sort of thing. But they've got us—legal guardian, custody of child.

CAPT. You mean we must give her up to them? (STRAINE *nods.*) Couldn't she be kept in charge by the Sheriff?

STR. No; prior right; they have guardianship. Keep her till we prove title.

CAPT. Which we cannot do in law. Curse law. Curse its machinery and the scoundrels who profit by it.

STR. Tut tut; law good thing, very. Wait till you want divorce.

CAPT. Then there is no hope?

STR. Don't see any. Do anything in the world, but useless. They've got us.

CAPT. And the moment they lay hands on her she will kill herself. I know that. Oh, Straine, this is awful! Awful! (*Covers face with hands.* STRAINE *turns face away.*)

[*Enter messenger boy,* L. 3 E., *with telegram. Goes up to* TIM, *who glances at envelope.*]

TIM. It's for that gintleman. (*Pointing to* CAPTAIN. *Boy goes to* CAPTAIN *and touches arm.* CAPTAIN *signs book and boy departs, exit* L. 3 E. CAPTAIN *opens and reads telegram, drops it on table idly and again covers face. Business of* CAPTAIN: *As if suddenly struck by idea, he picks up telegram again and reads it.*)

CAPT. Straine, read that despatch. (*Hands it.*)

STR. (*Reads.*) "No pardon granted Alberto Molino. This department will pay five hundred dollars reward for him, dead or alive. William Irwin, Governor." Well.

CAPT. (*Has risen to feet, thinking intently..*) My God! this may help us.

STR. How?

CAPT. Do you know Alberto Molino?

STR. No.

CAPT. He is the brother of Lita. He has been mixed up in this case all through. I tried to place him yesterday, when I telegraphed the Governor. Do you know where I saw him?

STR. Where?

CAPT. At the Hacienda. The Don had a night interview with him and gave him a paper. Straine, I believe Don Ramon has given Alberto Molino a forged pardon.

STR. (*Springing to feet.*) What!

TIM. And I know he have.

CAPT. and STR. You!

TIM. Yis, me. Didn't I see it? Didn't he bring it here himself?

CAPT. and STR. When? How?

TIM. This time not tin minutes. I'm an old friend o' his. I know'd him in the cave.

CAPT. But how did he happen to come?

TIM. He's afraid of the pardon himself.

CAPT. And is it a pardon?

TIM. Faix, I don't know. It has the Governor's signature an' a seal like a soup plate. He'll be back here. It's a'most time for him now.

CAPT. Straine, we must have that pardon. Tim, go to the barracks and place two men outside the door as soon as he enters. Tell them to let no one pass either way.

TIM. Aye, aye, sir. (*Exit* TIM, L. 3 E.)

STR. What's your plan?

CAPT. Finesse first; force if necessary. You see, we not only need the pardon, but we need him too. (*Knock at door.*) There he is. Follow my cue. Above all don't let him think we are interested. (*They seat themselves hurriedly,* CAPTAIN'S *back to door. Knock repeated.*)

STR. Come in. (*Enter* ALBERTO, L. 3 E.) Ah, Mr.——

BER. Gonzales is my name. (*He is very slow, very suspicious. Casts furtive glances around room.*)

STR. Sit down, sir. What can I do for you?

BER. I want to see him. (*Pointing to* TIM'S *stool.*)

STR. Oh, my clerk. He's stepped out for a minute. Take a chair.

BER. *Taking a step back and grasping knob of door.*) , I think—I will—call again.

CAPT. (*Lazily.*) Hallo!

BER. How are you!

CAPT. I'm glad I saw you. I was a little hasty yesterday. You won't mind that? (BERTO *says nothing. Looks at both men coolly yet doubtfully.*) I say, Straine, isn't this the party your clerk left a message for?

STR. I don't know. Did you call about some document?

BER. Yes. What did he say?

STR. Let me see. Hang this brief. What did he say, Captain?

CAPT. I wasn't paying attention. I think he said there was great doubt about it.

STR. What is the document—a deed?

BER. (*Thinks it over. Walks over to* CAPTAIN.) Say, Captain.

CAPT. What is it?

BER. You got any grudge agin me?

CAPT. None in the world.

BER. If a—you marry Lita you'd like to see me out o' the country, wouldn't yer?

CAPT. Well, frankly, I should prefer it.

BER. And neither of you will give me away in case I'm wrong?

CAPT. I will not.

STR. I won't—secret—lawyer's business.

BER. (*Slowly drawing paper from pocket.*) Well, it's this way. I've got a pardon here. I want to know if it's all straight?

STR. Let's see it (*impulsively*).

BER. You can *look* at it. I'll hold it.

[STRAINE *goes to left side of* BERTO *and looks over shoulder;* CAPTAIN *goes to right side.* BERTO *unfolds it, and they read, silently.*]

CAPT. How is that? The 25th of August?

BER. Yes.

CAPT. (*Indifferently.*) That's a good pardon. You're all right.

BER. (*To* STRAINE.) Do you say it's good?

STR. Straight as a string. Signed; sealed; Governor; Secretary of State; Eureka and the Bear; perfectly good; no question.

BER. Carramba! I'm glad! (*Draws long breath.*) I've been scared to death for half a day.

STR. Ha! ha! Should think so. Heap o' difference. And you came to see Tim about it? Ha! ha! ha!

BER. (*Joins laugh.*) Ain't he a lawyer, though? I thought from his talk he was the whole firm.

CAPT. That's Tim all over. (*All laugh.*) Well, you're safe. Are you going away?

BER. Yes; and I've got no time to lose (*starting for door*). Come and have a drink with *me*. Ha! ha! ha!

CAPT. There's one thing, old boy: The signatures might be forged; but they couldn't forge the seal. You better compare it with a State seal, Straine.

STR. Certainly. (*Picks paper from desk with seal on it.*

Goes to BERTO *and takes pardon from his hand. Goes to window* R. 4 E. *and holds both up to light,* BERTO *watching him.*)

CAPT. When do you go?

BER. (*Turns to answer;* STRAINE *shifts papers.*) This afternoon. (*Turns again to* STRAINE.)

STR. They're identical. No trouble. (*Slapping him on back.*) You're fixed now, old boy. (*Hands him folded paper.*)

BER. Good day, Senors. (*Starts for door* L. 3 E., *pocketing paper.* STRAINE *passes pardon to* CAPTAIN. BERTO *opens door and is confronted by two soldiers. Springs back.*)

BER. This is a trick.

CAPT. Keep quiet, now.

BER. (*Pulls out and unfolds paper; draws knife and springs at* CAPTAIN; CAPTAIN *covers him with revolver.*) Give me my pardon!

CAPT. Your pardon is bogus. I need it in my business. Men, take this man into that room. Shoot him, if he stirs.

[*Exit* BERTO *between soldiers* R. D. F.]

CAPT. Straine, we have them. He has altered a regular pardon. See: erasures in every line. What is the penalty for mutilating a public document?

STR. Five to fourteen years in State's Prison. Hi, yah! God Almighty! Hurrah! (*Capers about.*)

[*Enter* TIM L. 3 E.]

TIM. Luk at him, disgracin' the dignity o' the firm. (TIM *starts break-down imitating.*)

STR. Go to the devil!

CAPT. Where is Lita? She must know this instantly.

TIM. She's on her way. She'll be here directly. (*Goes to door* L. 3 E. *and opens.*)

[*Enter* LITA.]

CAPT. My love! My darling! We are saved. Saved from those scoundrels.

LITA. Oh! Captain!

CAPT. It's true. Not a shadow of doubt.

LITA. But, tell me.

CAPT. Not yet, darling. They will be here in a moment. In a little while you will know all. Stay here for a few minutes; only a few. (*Opens door; exit* LITA L. D. F.)

TIM. (*At door.*) Here they come; the Cheriff and the hull crowd, wid the Don leadin'. The blaggard! If I could hit his yaller nose wans't; jist aisy.

[*Enter* MANUELO, DON, SHERIFF, *and* ISABELLA. STRAINE *and* CAPTAIN *rise and bow. Awkward silence.*]

SHER. I've come for the young lady, Captain.

CAPT. (*Sadly.*) She is here. [MANUELO *and* DON *exchange pleased glances.* ISABELLA *is seated apart, taking sullen satisfaction in the proceedings.*)

STR. I am acting in this matter for Captain Kingsbury, gentlemen. I would request that during our preliminary conversation the Sheriff kindly step into another room.

SHER. Certainly, gentlemen.

DON. (*Arrogantly.*) I see no necessity for that. There is nothing on our side I am not willing the Sheriff should know.

CAPT. (*Dryly.*) Don't be too sure of that.

STR. In fact—we—don't care a rap—not a rap. But, better let him go.

MAN. (*A little alarmed.*) I see no harm in this.

DON. Oh, very well. It makes no difference to me. Just step outside, Sheriff. You won't have to wait long. (*Exit* SHERIFF, L. 3 E.)

STR. Now, gentlemen, state your proposition.

DON. There is no use wasting words. My friend, here, Father Pedro, demands, as the legal guardian of the young lady, that she be turned over to him. You can give her up or we will take her—take her, do you understand! (*To* CAPTAIN.

CAPT. I understand.

DON. Well, then. We demand the girl. Where is she?

CAPT. (*Going to door.*) Lita! (*Enter* LITA, L. D. F. CAPTAIN *takes her hand and leads her down near* MANUELO, *who rises and stretches out hand.* LITA *recoils toward* CAPTAIN.)

CAPT. If you will pardon me a moment, gentlemen, there are a few words I would like to say before parting with this young lady. Under the circumstances I think you ought to grant it. Are you willing? (MANUELO *bows.* DON *shifts chair nervously and assumes an air of contemptuous resignation.* STRAINE *chuckles aside and rubs his hands unseen by others.* TIM, *who evinces wild but quiet hilarity, sees old man and puts on a dignified scowl.*)

CAPT. In what I am going to say, gentlemen, it will be necessary to revert a week or so to certain scenes which have transpired not far from here. There are several characters in the story, and I think it will prove rather interesting.

DON. (*Impatiently.*) Go on, sir.

CAPT. Very well. I see you are attentive. I wanted your attention particularly, Don Ramon. The story begins with a

young lady who had a legal guardian, and the legal guardian had a friend. We will call the friend Don Carlos. The young lady ran away; she concealed herself in a cave—a pretty cave. Possibly some of you may have seen a cave just like it, some time in your lives. Do you think you ever have, Don Ramon?

[Don *does not look at him or show sign.*]

Capt. There was a man also in the cave, to whom the young lady was bound by what, to her, were the strongest obligations of honor and fealty. The man looked at things differently. He had an object to gain. He bargained with Don Carlos to betray her for a bribe. It was a peculiar bribe; a very peculiar one. In fact, the bribe is the entire hero of this little story I am telling you.

[Don *and* Manuelo *exchange glances, and become deeply interested.*]

Capt. The scene changes to a hacienda. It is dark. Don Carlos and his friend and the betrayer are there. They talk it over, and Don Carlos gives the betrayer his bribe. It was a little rash of Don Carlos, but he gave him the bribe; gave it with his own hands. We are now coming to the bribe, gentlemen. Keep your seats. I am glad you are interested.

[Don *and* Manuelo *are leaning nearly out of their chairs. They settle back hastily, and assume indifference.*]

Capt. This bribe was a paper, and curiously enough it was a pardon from the Governor of the State. Now, it happened, strangely enough, that the Governor had not pardoned the betrayer. The pardon was a beautiful pardon, but it was of Don Ramon's own construction. In fact, gentlemen, the pardon was——

Don. (*Rises.*) Enough, of your idle story. I will hear no more. It is a lie, from beginning to end.

Capt. As the pardon proves. (*Exhibiting pardon.*)

Don and Man. The pardon!

Don. It is a lie, a cooked up story.

Capt. Yes; and a story that you will remember for five years in State's Prison, sir.

Isa. My father—in prison!

Don. It is nonsense. Grant your foolish story true. You have not a single witness.

Capt. (*Making quiet sign to* Straine.) I am one.

Don. An interested party.

Capt. Jose is another.

Don. Jose saw nothing.

CAPT. And the third——

DON. Well, the third?

CAPT. The third is here. (*Enter* BERTO, R. D. F., *between soldiers. At sight of* BERTO, DON *claps hand to head with* "Amor de Dios!" *and falls into chair.* ISABELLA *screams.* MANUELO *is stunned.*) Is the story interesting, gentlemen?

STR. Better let me call in the Sheriff.

TIM. Begorra! I'll call him annyhow.

DON and MAN. No, no. Do not call him.

BER. Ha-ha-ha! Hello! Don Ramon. How are you, Isabel! Shake, old man. (*To* DON. DON *recoils.*) Oh, don't put on any frills. I'm onto the whole business. King of the combination. Whoopa, toro! We'll room together in prison, pardner, and I say, when there's any pie from home you'll divvy?

CAPT. Cease. Let us make our terms. You can make your own.

MAN. Captain, can I speak to you a moment? It is important. (CAPTAIN *takes him down stage.*) You see, I've only been doing my duty in all this. Now, if you won't prosecute me I'll tell you something you ought to know.

CAPT. Tell me first.

MAN. That fellow isn't Lita's brother at all. She only thinks so. You see, I've been looking up their history. I was interested in the property and traced them back. They were born of different parents, and were babies when his father married her mother.

CAPT. Is that so, Molino? (BERTO *comes over.*) This man says you are not Lita's brother. Is that true?

BER. Yes, it's true. I 'll do the square thing by you. We were babies when my father married her mother. But there's no need of your telling Lita that. She never knew the difference.

CAPT. (*Returning to table.*) I'll use my own judgment about that. Have you the paper, Straine? (STRAINE *places paper on table. To* PRIEST.) This is a resignation of your appointment as guardian of the young lady and a relinquishment of all your rights as such guardian. Sign it. (PRIEST *signs.*) That will do for you for the present. As for you, Don Ramon, I turn you over to your partner, there. As for your daughter, she goes to the Convent at San Jose, forever.

ISA. My God! The convent!

DON. Spare me this. (*Kneels to him.*) Captain, remember she is my only child. (LITA *twitches* CAPTAIN'S *sleeve. He smiles but does not turn. She twitches harder. He turns.*)

CAPT. What is it, dear? (*She whispers.*) For you? Very

well. Don Ramon, you may inform your daughter that she owes her freedom to the lady she tried so venomously to injure. It will have an added sweetness, I think. (CAPTAIN *turns away, taking* LITA *to sofa.*)

BER. (*To* DON.) Say, pard?

DON. What do you want, rascal?

BER. Easy, now. Don't get hot in the collar. You see the Captain, there?

DON. Well?

BER. Well, he's a friend of mine. He'll keep that paper, in case I need it.

DON. Go on.

BER. You see, I need a change o' climate. I've been workin' my brain too hard, breakin' rocks at San Quentin. I need a little trip, with some wine and tra! la! la! lee! you know.

DON. How much do you want?

BER. Ten thousand dollars.

DON. Ten thousand devils!

BER. Easy, pard. That's only two thousand a year. Five years, you know.

DON. Come to my office to-morrow morning.

BER. I'm sorry, pard; I've got to breakfast with some friends from the East. Suppose you gimme a draft on your agent in Guaymas; and don't stop the payment, Don, or I'll come back and stop you.

[DON *writes draft in book, tears out and gives it to* BERTO.]

BER. Bank o' Mexico; ten thousand; R. Valdez. Good as wheat. Ta, ta, pard; see you later.

SHER. (*Enters* L. 3 E.) Am I needed, gentlemen?

TIM. Faix, I think the gintlemen will shtruggle along widout you; for a time, annyhow.

[CAPTAIN *and* LITA *come down stage.*]

CAPT. Shall we finish the ceremony, love? Will you still be my wife?

LITA. Yes, yours forever.

[*Wedding march, orchestra, forte.*]

CURTAIN.

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